

CITY OF FORT WORTH - FERAL CAT POLICY

The City of Fort Worth endorses Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as a method of controlling feral cat populations and as a means of establishing a system of community-based resources dedicated to:

- Ensuring feral cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and adequately cared for by feral cat colony caretakers;
- Abating nuisances or other public health or safety threats caused by feral cats; and
- Reducing the number of feral cats euthanized at the City's animal shelter.

TNR in Fort Worth will be accomplished through a partnership between Feral Cat Colony Sponsors, Feral Cat Colony Caretakers, and the City of Fort Worth. Responsibilities for each of these three entities are detailed below:

Sponsor Responsibilities:

1. Sponsors must obtain a no-cost permit from the City of Fort Worth to serve in this capacity.
 - a. To obtain a permit, a sponsor must:
 - i. Fill out a sponsor application form to be reviewed and assessed by the City.
 - ii. Be approved by the Director and agree to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy.
 - iii. Demonstrate the ability, capacity and willingness to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy.
2. Sponsors must establish processes to evaluate and approve (or deny) Feral Cat Colony Caretaker application requests.
3. Sponsors must oversee the activities of the Feral Cat Colony Caretakers for which they serve as Sponsor by:
 - a. Maintaining access to Caretaker records, including number of cats in each colony, and vaccination and spay/neuter records of cats in each Caretaker colony.
 - b. Providing for Caretakers, at a minimum, Department-approved written educational training addressing uniform standards and procedures for colony maintenance.
 - c. Assisting to resolve any complaints over the conduct of a Feral Cat Colony Caretaker for which they serve as Sponsor.
4. Sponsors must fully cooperate with the City in resolving:
 - a. Any situation involving feral cats posing a potential threat to public health and/or safety, including the possible risk of rabies transmission;
 - b. Any investigation into animal cruelty;
 - c. Any nuisance investigation;
 - d. Any situation involving feral cats in unsafe or inappropriate areas.

Caretaker Responsibilities:

1. Caretakers must register with an appropriately-permitted Sponsor.
2. Caretakers must take appropriate and reasonable steps to:

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- a. Vaccinate the colony population for rabies and to update the vaccinations in accordance with state law;
 - b. Spay or neuter colony population by a licensed veterinarian;
 - c. Eartip the ear of colony population that has been vaccinated and spayed/neutered.
3. Caretakers must provide their Sponsor with the total numbers of cats in the colony and copies of documents demonstrating that the cats have been vaccinated, and spayed/neutered.
4. Caretakers must provide food, water and, if feasible, shelter for colony cats.
5. Caretakers must obtain proper medical attention for any colony cat that appears to require it.
6. Caretakers must observe the colony cats at least twice per week and monitor any illness or unusual behavior noticed in any colony cat.
7. Caretakers must obtain approval of the owner of any property, or any authorized representative of the owner, to which the Feral Cat Colony Caretaker requires access to provide colony care.
8. Caretakers must take all reasonable steps to (1) remove kittens from the colony after they have been weaned, (2) place kittens in adoption programs, homes or foster homes for the purpose of subsequent permanent placement, and (3) capture and spay the mother cat.
9. Caretakers must provide Sponsor with an annual accounting of (1) the number of all cats in their colony at beginning of year, (2) the number of all cats in their colony at the end of the year, (3) explanation of any variances.
10. Caretakers must fully cooperate with their Sponsor and/or the City to address:
 - a. Any situation involving feral cats posing a potential threat to public health and/or safety, including the possible risk of rabies transmission;
 - b. Any investigation into animal cruelty;
 - c. Any nuisance complaint investigation;
 - d. Any situation involving feral cats in unsafe or inappropriate areas.

City of Fort Worth Responsibilities:

1. The City of Fort Worth's responsibilities will be carried out by the Code Compliance Director or his/her designee.
2. The City is ultimately responsible for resolving complaints received involving feral cats, feral cat colonies, Feral Cat Colony Sponsors, and Feral Cat Colony Caretakers.
3. In response to a nuisance cat complaint, the City shall:
 - a. Offer education resources for abating nuisance without removing cat.
 - b. Offer loaned trap service for the resident to trap the nuisance cat and bring to the animal shelter.
 - c. Offer other trap service resource referrals.
4. If a trapped cat is brought to the animal shelter as a nuisance, the City shall:
 - a. Determine if cat is feral or domestic.
 - b. Notify Sponsors of feral cat at the shelter.
 - c. Determine if the cat has been trapped before as a nuisance.

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- i. If the feral cat has been trapped as a nuisance only once, City will microchip and release cat to Caretaker if documentation can be produced verifying the cat is from the Caretaker's colony.
- ii. If the feral cat has been trapped as a nuisance more than once, City will not release cat to Caretaker to be returned to environment in which it has been previously removed as a nuisance.
 1. City will release cat to another entity that agrees to relocate cat in an area the City determines will not pose a nuisance threat (i.e. barn cat program).
 2. If no other solution is identified for a feral cat trapped more than once as a nuisance, the cat will be humanely euthanized.

City of Fort Worth Authority:

- a. The City has the authority to revoke Feral Cat Sponsor and Feral Cat Caretaker status if City determines the Sponsor or Caretaker has failed to comply with policy requirements.
- b. For the purposes of this policy, the City shall determine when there is a potential threat to public health or safety, when feral cats are in unsafe or inappropriate areas, or if feral cats are at risk of harm or suffering.
- c. If the City determines that a feral cat or Feral Cat Colony poses a threat to public health or safety, are in unsafe or inappropriate areas, or determines the cats are at risk of harm or suffering, the City shall have the discretion to undertake any lawful action deemed necessary including removing individual cats or entire colonies.
- d. If Sponsor and/or Caretaker are unsuccessful in correcting an identified nuisance, the City may remove nuisance cat or cats.